

Quagga Mussel Diver Decontamination Protocols

After inspecting bodies of water known or suspected to contain live quagga mussels at any life stage, all field equipment that was in some way in contact with the water should be thoroughly cleaned before moving to another site. If sampling is being performed to determine whether quagga mussels are present at a given site, assume that they are present and thoroughly clean all diving and sampling equipment before moving to another site.

Divers:

1. Check all gear that could potentially hide any veligers (include regulators, BCDs, wetsuits, masks, snorkels and any other dive gear),
2. Thoroughly clean all regulators, BCDs, wetsuits, masks, snorkels and any other dive gear, making sure to clean both the inside and outside of the BCD to ensure that no mud or organic matter is present – use a brush if necessary.
3. After cleaning, rinse your suit, equipment and inside of BCD with hot (<40° C or 104°F) or salt (1/2 cup salt/gallon) water. Note, if you use the salt-water solution, it is very important to thoroughly rinse the equipment in freshwater after your cleaning because the salt crystals can harm your equipment.
4. Allow gear, suit and other equipment to dry before diving in different waters. Veligers can survive for a period of time on wet scuba gear;
5. Consider using two sets of gear if applicable, alternating between set every other day.
6. If feasible, consider freezing your equipment overnight to kill any veligers.

Sampling equipment (nets, waders, boots, buckets, etc.):

1. All field equipment needs to be visually inspected and all visible mussels removed and killed.
2. All field equipment must be cleaned by soaking, dipping in, or scrubbing with a salt water solution. If one of these approaches is not possible, the equipment should ideally be pressure-washed or at least rinsed with water (hot and/or high pressure if possible) and allowed to dry completely before next use.
3. Particular attention should be given to places where the mussels could be accidentally trapped, such as the treads of boots and waders, hinges of benthic grabs, etc.
4. If feasible, consider freezing your equipment overnight to kill any veligers.